

BACKGROUND FACTS

NO COUNTRY, NO HONOUR, NO HOPE

Cuban Counter-Revolutionary Émigrés in the U.S.A.

CPYRGHT

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PLANES carrying the ringleaders of the overthrown Batista regime began to land one after another in the United States early in the morning of January 1, 1959. Among those who fled from popular retribution to seek sanctuary with their masters were Ruben Batista, the tyrant's son, Tabernilla, Chief of the General Staff, Pilar Garcia, chief of police, Rodríguez Calderon, commander of the navy, and other top officials and their retinue—a few hundred men all told (Batista himself found asylum in the Dominican Republic).

That was the start of the Cuban counter-revolutionary emigration in the United States. In the following years, it was destined to play a truly sinister part both in international affairs and in the domestic policy of the United States.

HOSPITALITY WITH A PURPOSE

THE U.S. authorities received Batista's men with open arms. They were not interned in immigration centres and their luggage was not inspected by the customs authorities. All red tape was cut to facilitate their entry. The immigration authorities explained that the Cubans had been given asylum in keeping "with tradition", like other political refugees from Latin American countries.

Subsequent developments have shown that "tradition" had nothing to do with it. U.S. hospitality was explained by Washington's far-reaching plans to use the refugees to overthrow the Cuban revolutionary Government. U.S. imperialism needed the enemies of the revolution to camouflage its plans against the Cuban revolution, on the one hand, and to implement these plans, on the other.

White Rose, the first counter-revolutionary group of Cuban émigrés began to operate in New York in June 1959. It proclaimed an armed struggle against the revolutionary

Government of Cuba as its aim. White Rose was headed by such odious Batista figures as Nunez Portuondo, former Cuban delegate to the United Nations, Senator Rolando Masferrer, General Pedraza and Rafael Dias Balart, son of a Batista Senator. But its real founders were the U.S. intelligence and Big Business.

On July 8, 1959, Portuondo sent Nicolas Arroya, former Batista ambassador to Washington, a memorandum about his talk with a certain Mr. Grey who posed as a representative of *Life*. It follows from the memorandum that it was during this conversation that questions related to organising White Rose and financing it from Washington sources were finally thrashed out.¹

White Rose has become a sort of model for other organisations of Cuban counter-revolutionaries in the United States, such as Guerra or Crusade. But the first émigré groups did not become the centres for uniting the Cuban counter-revolutionaries. *New York Daily Mirror* correspondent Winchester wrote at the time that the major weakness of most of these organisations was their close contact with Batista and his government.² The ousted Cuban dictator was so discredited that ties with him were not an asset but a liability for his followers.

In social origin and economic status, the Cuban émigrés were a motley crowd. As revolutionary reforms were effected in Cuba (the most important undoubtedly being the land reform initiated in May 1959), the differentiation of the class forces was accelerated in the country.

The Batista men were followed into exile by bankers, owners of sugar refineries and latifundists. Then came the middle class and also many engineers, lawyers, doctors, and so on. Finally came the turn of the petty bour-

¹ *El Diario nacional*, Nov. 13, 1959.

² See *New York Daily Mirror*, Nov. 8, 1959.